













ALDRICH'S POEMS.





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# P O E M S

BY

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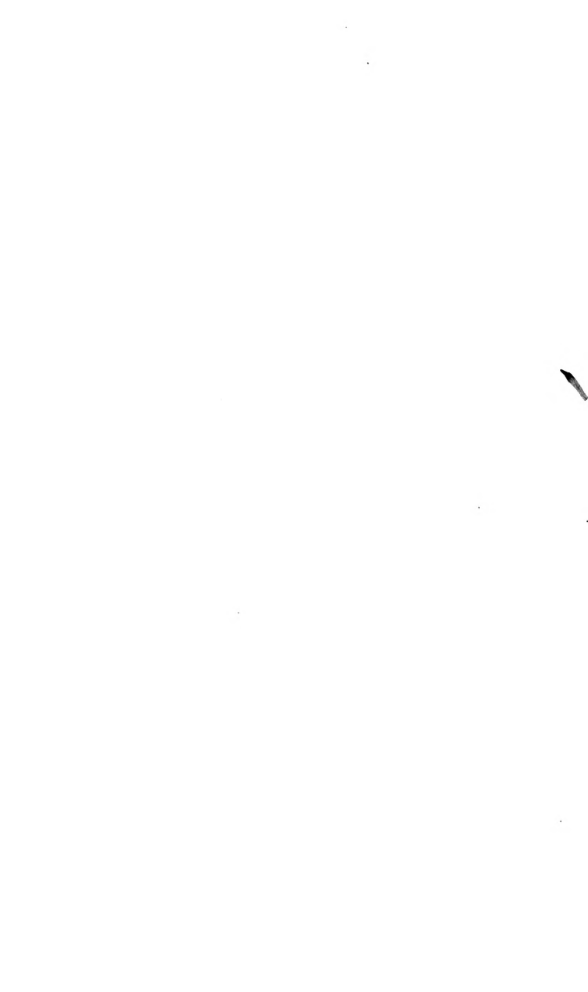
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To  
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I.

CLOTH OF GOLD.



## CLOTH OF GOLD.

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### I.

#### CLOTH OF GOLD.

You ask us if by rule or no  
Our many-colored songs are wrought?  
Upon the cunning loom of thought,  
We weave our fancies, so and so.

The busy shuttle comes and goes  
Across the rhymes, and deftly weaves  
A tissue out of autumn leaves,  
With here a thistle, there a rose.

With art and patience thus is made  
The poet's perfect Cloth of Gold:  
When woven so, nor moth nor mould  
Nor time, can make its colors fade.

## II.

## THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS.

KIND was my friend who, in the Eastern land,  
Remembered me with such a gracious hand,  
And sent this Moorish Crescent which has been  
Worn on the tawny bosom of a queen.

No more it sinks and rises in unrest  
To the soft music of her heathen breast ;  
No barbarous chief shall bow before it more,  
No turban'd slave shall envy and adore !

I place beside this relic of the Sun  
A Cross of Cedar brought from Lebanon,  
Once borne, perchance, by some pale monk  
    who trod  
The desert to Jerusalem—and his God !

Here do they lie, two symbols of two creeds,  
Each meaning something to our human needs,  
Both stained with blood, and sacred made by  
    faith,  
By tears, and prayers, and martyrdom, and  
    death.

That for the Moslem is, but this for me !  
The waning Crescent lacks divinity :  
It gives me dreams of battles, and the woes  
Of women shut in hushed seraglios.

But when this Cross of simple wood I see,  
The Star of Bethlehem shines again for me,  
And glorious visions break upon my gloom—  
The patient Christ, and Mary at the Tomb !

## III.

## THE SHEIK'S WELCOME.

BECAUSE thou com'st, a weary guest,  
Unto my tent, I bid thee rest.  
This cruse of oil, this skin of wine,  
These tamarinds and dates, are thine ;  
And while thou eatest, Medjid, there,  
Shall bathe the heated nostrils of thy mare.

Illah il' Allah ! Even so  
An Arab chieftain treats a foe,  
Holds him as one without a fault  
Who breaks his bread and tastes his salt ;  
And, in fair battle, strikes him dead  
With the same pleasure that he gives him  
bread !



## IV.

## THE UNFORGIVEN.

NEAR my bed, there, hangs the picture, jewels  
could not buy from me :  
'Tis a Siren, a brown Siren, in her sea-weed  
drapery,  
Playing on a lute of amber, by the margin of a  
sea.

In the east, the rose of morning seems as if  
'twould blossom soon,  
But it never, never blossoms, in this picture ;  
and the moon  
Never ceases to be crescent, and the June is  
always June !

And the heavy-branched banana never yields  
its creamy fruit ;  
In the citron-trees are nightingales for ever  
stricken mute ;  
And the Siren sits, her fingers on the pulses of  
the lute !

In the hushes of the midnight, when the  
heliotropes grow strong

With the dampness, I hear music—hear a quiet,  
plaintive song—

A most sad, melodious utterance, as of some  
immortal wrong—

Like the pleading, oft repeated, of a Soul that  
pleads in vain,

Of a damnéd Soul repentant, that cannot be  
pure again!—

And I lie awake and listen to the music of her  
pain!

O, the mystical, wild music! how it melts into  
the white

Of the moon that turns the sombre, brooding  
shadows into light!

How it sobs itself to slumber in the quiet of  
the night!

And whence comes this mournful music?—  
whence, unless it chance to be

From the Siren, the sad Siren, in her sea-weed  
drapery,

Playing on a lute of amber, by the margin of a  
sea!

## V.

## DRESSING THE BRIDE.

*A Fragment.*

So, after bath, the slave-girls brought  
The broidered raiment for her wear,  
The misty izar from Mosul,  
The pearls and opals for her hair,  
The slippers for her supple feet,  
(Two radiant crescent moons they were,)  
And lavender, and spikenard sweet,  
And attars, nedd, and richest musk.  
When they had finished dressing her,  
(The eye of morn, the heart's desire!)  
Like one pale star against the dusk,  
A single diamond on her brow  
Trembled with its imprisoned fire!

## VI.

## TWO SONGS FROM THE PERSIAN.

## I.

O, CEASE, sweet music, let us rest :  
The morning comes, the hateful dawn !  
Henceforth let day be counted night,  
And midnight called the morn.

O, cease, sweet music, let us rest :  
A tearful languid spirit lies  
(Like the dim scent in violets,)  
In Beauty's gentle eyes.

There is a sadness in sweet sound  
That quickens tears. O music, lest  
We weep with thy strange sorrow, cease !  
Be still, and let us rest.

## II.

And sad are they who know not love,  
But, far from passion's tears and smiles,  
Drift down a moonless sea, beyond  
The silvery coasts of fairy isles !

And sadder they whose longing lips  
Kiss empty air, and never touch  
The dear warm mouth of those they love—  
Waiting, wasting, suffering much !

But clear as amber, fine as musk,  
Is life to those who, pilgrim-wise,  
Move hand in hand from dawn to dusk,  
Each morning nearer Paradise.

O, not for them shall angels pray !  
They stand in everlasting light,  
They walk in Allah's smile by day,  
And nestle in his heart by night.

## VII.

## TIGER-LILIES.

I LIKE not lady-slippers,  
Nor yet the sweet-pea blossoms,  
Nor yet the flaky roses,  
    Red, or white as snow ;  
I like the chaliced lilies,  
The heavy Eastern lilies,  
The gorgeous tiger-lilies,  
    That in our garden grow !

For they are tall and slender ;  
Their mouths are dashed with carmine  
And when the wind sweeps by them,  
    On their emerald stalks  
They bend so proud and graceful—  
They are Circassian women,  
The favorites of the Sultan,  
    Adown our garden walks !

And when the rain is falling,  
I sit beside the window  
And watch them glow and glisten,  
    How they burn and glow !  
O for the burning lilies,  
The tender Eastern lilies,  
The gorgeous tiger-lilies,  
    That in our garden grow !

## VIII.

## THE SULTANA.

In the draperies' purple gloom,  
In the gilded chamber she stands,  
I catch a glimpse of her bosom's bloom,  
And the white of her jewelled hands !

Each wandering wind that blows  
By the lattice, seems to bear  
From her parted lips the scent of the rose,  
And the jasmine from her hair !

Her dark-browed odalisques lean  
To the fountain's feathery rain,  
And a parroquet, by the broidered screen,  
Dangles its silvery chain.

But pallid, star-sweet, and cold,  
Like a phantom she fills the place,  
Sick to the heart, in that cage of gold,  
With her sumptuous disgrace !



## IX.

## IT WAS A KNIGHT OF ARAGON.

“Fuerte qual azero entre armas,  
Y qual cera entre las damas.”

## 1.

It was a Knight of Aragon,  
And he was brave to see,  
His helmet and his hauberk,  
And the greaves upon his knee  
His escuderos rode in front,  
His cavaliers behind,  
With stained plumes and gonfalons,  
And music in the wind !

## 2.

It was the maid Prudencia,  
The lily of Madrid,  
Who watched him from her balcony,  
Among the jasmines hid.

‘ O Virgin Mother ! ’ quoth the Knight,  
‘ Is that the daybreak there ? ’  
It was the saintly light that shone  
Above the maiden’s hair !

## 3.

Then he who crossed the Pyrenees  
To fight the dogs of France,  
Grew pale with love for her whose look  
Had pierced him like a lance ;  
And they will wed the morrow morn :  
Beat softly, watchful stars !—  
And mind you, gallant cavaliers,  
How Venus conquers Mars.

## X.

## WHEN THE SULTAN GOES TO ISPAHAN.

WHEN *the Sultan Shah-Zaman*  
*Goes to the city Ispahan,*  
Even before he gets so far  
As the place where the clustered palm-trees are,  
At the last of the thirty palace-gates,  
The pet of the harem, Rose-in-Bloom,  
Orders a feast in his favorite room—  
Glittering squares of colored ice,  
Sweetened with syrop, tinctured with spice,  
Creams, and cordials, and sugared dates,  
Syrian apples, Othmanee quinces,  
Limes, and citrons, and apricots,  
And wines that are known to Eastern princes;  
And Nubian slaves, with smoking pots  
Of spiced meats and costliest fish

And all that the curious palate could wish,  
Pass in and out of the cedarn doors !  
Scattered over mosaic floors  
Are anemones, myrtles, and violets,  
And a musical fountain throws its jets  
Of a hundred colors into the air !  
The dusk Sultana loosens her hair,  
And stains with the henna-plant the tips  
Of her pearly nails, and bites her lips  
Till they bloom again—but, alas, *that* rose  
Not for the Sultan buds and blows !  
*Not for the Sultan Shah-Zaman*  
*When he goes to the city Ispahan !*

Then at a wave of her sunny hand,  
The dancing-girls of Samarcand  
Float in like mists from Fairy-land !  
And to the low voluptuous swoons  
Of music rise and fall the moons  
Of their full brown bosoms. Orient blood  
Runs in their veins, shines in their eyes :  
And there, in this Eastern Paradise,  
Filled with the fumes of sandal-wood,  
And Khoten musk, and aloes and myrrh,

Sits Rose-in-Bloom on a silk divan,  
Sipping the wines of Astrakhan ;  
And her Arab lover sits with her.  
*That's when the Sultan Shah-Zaman  
Goes to the city Ispahan !*

Now, when I see an extra light,  
Flaming, flickering on the night  
From my neighbor's casement opposite,  
I know as well as I know to pray,  
I know as well as a tongue can say,  
*That the innocent Sultan Shah-Zaman  
Has gone to the city Ispahan !*

## XI.

## HASCHEESH.

## 1.

STRICKEN with thought, I staggered through  
the night ;  
The heavens leaned down to me with splendid  
fires ;  
The seven Pleiads, changed to magic lyres,  
Made music as I went ; and to my sight  
A Palace shaped itself against the skies :  
Great sapphire-studded portals suddenly  
Opened upon vast Gothic galleries  
Of gold and porphyry, and I could see,  
Through half-drawn curtains that let in the  
day,  
Dim tropic gardens stretching far away !

## 2.

Ah ! what a wonder seized upon my soul,  
When from that structure of the upper airs

I saw unfold a flight of crystal stairs  
For my ascending. . . . Then I heard the roll  
Of unseen oceans clashing at the Pole. . . .  
A terror fell upon me . . . . a vague sense  
Of near calamity. O, lead me hence!  
I shrieked, and lo! from out a darkling hole  
That opened at my feet, crawled after me,  
Up the broad staircase, creatures of huge size,  
Fanged, warty monsters, with their lips and  
    eyes  
Hung with slim leeches sucking hungrily.—  
Away, vile drug! I will avoid thy spell,  
Honey of Paradise, black dew of Hell!

## XII.

## A PRELUDE.

HASSAN BEN ABDUL at the Ivory Gate  
Of Bagdad sat and chattered in the sun,  
Like any magpie chattered to himself  
And four lank, swarthy Arab boys that stopt  
A gambling game with peach-pits, and drew  
near.

Then Iman Khan, the friend of thirsty souls,  
The seller of pure water, ceased his cry,  
And placed his water-skins against the gate—  
They looked so like him, with their sallow  
cheeks

Puffed out like Iman's! Then a eunuch came  
And swung a pack of sweetmeats from his head,  
And stood—a hideous pagan cut in jet.

And then a Jew, whose sandal-straps were red  
With desert-dust, limped, cringing, to the  
crowd—

He, too would listen; and close after him



A jeweller that glittered like his shop :  
Then two blind mendicants, who wished to go  
Six diverse ways at once, came stumbling by,  
But hearing Hassan chatter, sat them down.  
And if the Khaleef had been riding near,  
He would have paused to listen like the rest,  
For Hassan's fame was ripe in all the East !  
From spicy Cairo to far Ispahan,  
From Mecca to Damascus, he was known,  
Hassan, the Arab with the Singing Heart.  
His songs were sung by boatmen on the Nile,  
By Beddowee maidens, and in Tartar camps,  
While all men loved him as they love their eyes  
And when he spake, the wisest, next to him,  
Was he who listened. And thus Hassan sung.  
—And I, a stranger, lingering in Bagdad,  
Half English and half Arab, by my beard !  
Caught at the gilded epic as it grew,  
And for my Christian brothers wrote it down.

## XIII.

## A TURKISH LEGEND.

A CERTAIN Pasha, dead five thousand years,  
Once from his harem fled in sudden tears,

And had this sentence on the city's gate  
Deeply engraven, "Only God is great."

So these four words above the city's noise  
Hung like the accents of an angel's voice ;

And evermore, from the high barbican,  
Saluted each returning caravan.

Lost is that city's glory. Every gust  
Lifts, with crisp leaves, the unknown Pasha's  
dust.

And all is ruin—save one wrinkled gate  
Whereon is written, "Only God is great!"

II.

SWALLOW • FLIGHTS.



## SWALLOW-FLIGHTS.

---

### I.

#### GHOSTS.

THESE forms we fancy shadows, those strange  
lights  
That flash on dank morasses, the quick wind  
That smites us by the roadside—are the Night's  
Innumerable children. Unconfined  
By shroud or coffin, disembodied souls,  
Uneasy spirits, steal into the air  
From ancient graveyards when the curfew tolls  
At the day's death. Pestilence and despair  
Fly with the sightless bats at set of sun.  
And wheresoever murders have been done,  
In crowded palaces or lonesome woods,  
Where'er a soul has sold itself and lost  
Its high inheritance, there, hovering, broods  
Some sad, invisible, accurséd Ghost !

## II.

## THE FADED VIOLET.

WHAT thought is folded in thy leaves!  
What tender thought, what speechless pain!  
I hold thy faded lips to mine,  
Thou darling of the April rain!

I hold thy faded lips to mine,  
Though scent and azure tint are fled—  
O dry, mute lips! ye are the type  
Of something in me cold and dead:

Of something wilted like thy leaves;  
Of fragrance flown, of beauty gone;  
Yet, for the love of those white hands  
That found thee, April's earliest-born—

That found thee when thy dewy mouth  
Was purpled as with stains of wine—  
For love of her who love forgot,  
I hold thy faded lips to mine !

That thou shouldst live when I am dead,  
When hate is dead, for me, and wrong,  
For this, I use my subtlest art,  
For this, I fold thee in my song.

## III.

## DEAD.

A SORROWFUL woman said to me,  
‘Come in and look on our child!’  
I saw an angel at shut of day,  
And it never spoke—but smiled.

I think of it in the city’s streets,  
I dream of it when I rest—  
The violet eyes, the waxen hands,  
And the one white rose on the breast!



## IV.

## THE LUNCH.

A GOTHIC window, where a damask curtain  
Made the blank daylight shadowy and uncertain :

A slab of agate on four eagle-talons  
Held trimly up and neatly taught to balance :  
A porcelain dish, o'er which in many a cluster  
Plump grapes hung down, dead-ripe and without lustre :

A melon cut in thin delicious slices :  
A cake that seemed mosaic-work in spices :  
Two China cups with golden tulips sunny,  
And rich inside with chocolate like honey ;  
And she and I the banquet-scene completing  
With dreamy words—and very pleasant eating !

## V.

## BEFORE THE RAIN.

WE knew it would rain, for all the morn,  
A spirit on slender ropes of mist  
Was lowering its golden buckets down  
Into the vapory amethyst

Of marshes and swamps and dismal fens—  
Scooping the dew that lay in the flowers,  
Dipping the jewels out of the sea,  
To sprinkle them over the land in showers.

WE knew it would rain, for the poplars showed  
The white of their leaves, the amber grain  
Shrunk in the wind—and the lightning now  
Is tangled in tremulous skeins of rain!

## VI.

## AFTER THE RAIN.

THE rain has ceased, and in my room  
The sunshine pours an airy flood ;  
And on the church's dizzy vane  
The ancient Cross is bathed in blood.

From out the dripping ivy-leaves,  
Antiquely-carven, gray and high,  
A dormer, facing westward, looks  
Upon the village like an eye :

And now it glimmers in the sun,  
A globe of gold, a disc, a speck :  
And in the belfry sits a Dove  
With purple ripples on her neck.

## VII.

## WEDDED.

[*Provençal Air.*]

## 1.

THE happy bells shall ring,  
    *Marguèrite* ;  
The summer birds shall sing,  
    *Marguèrite* —  
You smile, but you shall wear  
Orange blossoms in your hair,  
    *Marguèrite* !

## 2.

Ah me ! the bells have rung  
    *Marguèrite* ;  
The summer birds have sung,  
    *Marguèrite* —  
But cypress leaf and rue  
Make a sorry wreath for you,  
    *Marguèrite* !

## VIII.

## THE BLUE-BELLS OF NEW ENGLAND.

THE roses are a regal troop,  
And humble folks the daisies ;  
But, Blue-bells of New-England,  
To you I give my praises—  
To you, fair phantoms in the sun,  
Whom merry Spring discovers,  
With blue-birds for your laureates,  
And honey-bees for lovers.

The south-wind breathes, and lo ! ye throng  
This rugged land of ours—  
I think the pale blue clouds of May  
Drop down, and turn to flowers !  
By cottage doors along the roads,  
You show your winsome faces,  
And, like the spectre lady, haunt  
The lonely woodland places.

All night your eyes are closed in sleep,  
But open at the dawning ;  
Such simple faith as yours can see  
God's coming in the morning !  
You lead me by your holiness,  
To pleasant ways of duty :  
You set my thoughts to melody,  
You fill me with your beauty.

And you are like the eyes I love,  
So modest and so tender,  
Just touched with daybreak's glorious light,  
And evening's quiet splendor.  
Long may the heavens give you rain,  
The sunshine its caresses,  
Long may the woman that I love  
Entwine you in her tresses.

## IX.

NORA McCARTY.

[*Irish Air.*]

## 1.

NORA is pretty,  
Nora is witty,  
Witty and pretty as pretty can be !  
She's the completest  
Of girls, and the neatest,  
The brightest and sweetest :  
But she's not for me.

*Mavourneen !*

## 2.

Nora, be still, you !  
Nora, why will you  
Be witty and pretty as pretty can be,  
So strong and so slender,  
So haughty and tender,  
So sweet in your splendor—  
And yet not for me ?

*Mavourneen !*

## X.

## THE MOORLAND.

THE moorland lies a dreary waste ;  
The night is dark with drizzling rain :  
In yonder yawning cave of cloud  
The snaky lightning writhes with pain.  
*And the Wind is wailing bitterly.*

O sobbing rain, outside my door,  
O wailing phantoms, make your moan !  
Go through the night in blind despair—  
Your shadowy lips have touched my own  
*And the Wind is wailing bitterly.*

No more the robin breaks its heart  
Of music in the pathless woods !  
The ravens croak for such as I,  
The plovers screech above their broods.  
*And the Wind is wailing bitterly.*



All mournful things are friends of mine,  
    (That weary sound of falling leaves!)  
Ah, there is not a kindred soul  
    For me on earth, but moans and grieves.  
    *And the Wind is wailing bitterly.*

I cannot sleep this lonesome night ;  
    The ghostly rain goes by in haste,  
And, further than the eye can reach,  
    The moorland lies a dreary waste !  
    *And the Wind is wailing bitterly.*

## XL.

## NAMELESS PAIN.

IN my nostrils the summer wind  
Blows the exquisite scent of the rose !  
O for the golden, golden wind,  
Breaking the buds as it goes,  
Breaking the buds, and bending the grass,  
And spilling the scent of the rose !

O wind of the summer morn,  
Tearing the petals in twain,  
Wafting the fragrant soul  
Of the rose through valley and plain,  
I would you could tear my heart to-day,  
And scatter its nameless pain.

## XII.

## THE GIRLS.

MARIAN, May, and Maud  
Have not passed me by—  
Archéd foot, and mobile mouth,  
And bronze-brown eye!

When my hair is gray,  
Then I shall be wise ;  
Then, thank heaven ! I shall not care  
For bronze-brown eyes.

Then let Maud and May  
And Marian pass me by ;  
So they do not scorn me now  
What care I ?

## XIII.

## MURDER DONE.

## 1.

INVISIBLE fingers of air  
Just lifted the curtain's fold,  
Just rippled the calm of her golden hair,  
Beautiful treacherous gold !  
And she stood like the thought of a sculptor,  
    carved  
In marble, snowy and cold ;  
But her pure, sweet look was as foul a lie  
As ever a woman told !

## 2.

A statue lay stark at my feet,  
Dead to the finger-tips !  
A darkness hung in the lengths of her hair,  
And shadowed her perjured lips.

I strangled her voice, but, O heaven !  
I could not strangle one moan  
That followed me out in the silent streets  
As I fled through the midnight alone.  
— This in a dream. Now I ask,  
Am I guilty as if I were caught  
With my hands at her throat? Is it murder  
done?—  
I murdered her in my thought!

## XIV.

## MIRACLES.

SICK of myself and all that keeps the light  
Of heaven away from me and mine, I seek  
This bare, bleak hill, and on its highest peak,  
Lingering, watch the coming of the night.  
'Tis ever a new miracle to me.  
Men look to God for some mysterious sign,  
For marriage-feasts with water turned to wine,  
For Christ to walk upon the troubled sea ;  
As if He did not to our sense unfold  
His meanings as miraculous as of old !  
Come watch with me the shaft of fire that  
    glows  
In yonder West : the fair, frail palaces,  
The fading Alps and archipelagoes,  
And great cloud-continents of sunset-seas.

## XV.

## MAY.

HEBE's here, May is here !  
The air is fresh and sunny ;  
And the miser-bees are busy  
Hoarding golden honey !

See the knots of butter-cups,  
And the double pansies—  
Thick as these, within my brain,  
Grow the quaintest fancies !

Let me write my songs to-day,  
Rhymes with dulcet closes—  
Four-line epics one might hide  
In the hearts of roses.

## XVI.

## PALABRAS CARIÑOSAS.

[*Spanish Air.*]

GOOD-NIGHT ! I have to say good night  
To such a host of peerless things !  
Good-night unto that fragile hand  
All queenly with its weight of rings ;  
Good-night to fond, up-lifted eyes,  
Good-night to chestnut braids of hair,  
Good-night unto the perfect mouth,  
And all the sweetness nestled there—  
The snowy hand detains me, then  
I'll have to say Good-night again !

But there will come a time, my love,  
When, if I read our stars aright,  
I shall not linger by this porch  
With my adieus. Till then, good night !  
You wish the time were now ? And I.  
You do not blush to wish it so ?



You would have blushed yourself to death  
To own so much a year ago—

What, both these snowy hands ! ah, then,  
I'll have to say Good-night again !

## XVII.

## LITTLE MAUD.

O WHERE is our dainty, our darling,  
The daintiest darling of all?  
O where is the voice on the stairway,  
O where is the voice in the hall?  
The little short steps in the entry,  
The silvery laugh in the hall?  
O where is our dainty, our darling,  
The daintiest darling of all,  
*Little Maud?*

The peaches are ripe in the orchard,  
The apricots ready to fall;  
And the grapes reach up to the sunshine  
Over the garden-wall—  
But where are the lips, full and melting,  
That looked up so pouting and red,  
When we dangled the sun-purpled bunches  
Of Isabells over her head?

O rosebud of women! where are you?

(She never replies to our call!)

O where is our dainty, our darling,

The daintiest darling of all,

*Little Maud?*

XVIII  
SONGS.

## I.

I HAVE placed a golden  
Ring upon the hand  
Of the blithest little  
Lady in the land!

When the early roses  
Scent the sunny air,  
She shall gather white ones  
To tremble in her hair!

Hasten, happy roses,  
Come to me by May—  
In your folded petals  
Lies my wedding day.

## II.

THE chestnuts shine through the cloven rind,  
And the woodland leaves are red, my dear;  
The scarlet fuchsias burn in the wind—  
Funeral plumes for the Year!

The Year which has brought me so much woe,  
That if it were not for you, my dear,  
I could wish the fuchsias' fire might glow  
For me as well as the Year.

## III.

THE blackbird sings in the hazel-brake,  
And the squirrel sits on the tree ;  
And Blanche she walks in the merry green-  
wood,  
Down by the summer sea.

The blackbird lies when he sings of love,  
And the squirrel, a rogue is he ;  
And Blanche is an arrant flint, I swear,  
And light as light can be.

O blackbird, die in the hazel-brake !  
And, squirrel, starve on the tree !  
And Blanche—you may walk in the merry  
greenwood,  
You are nothing more to me !

## IV.

Out from the depths of my heart  
Had arisen this single cry,  
Let me behold my belovéd,  
Let me behold her, and die.

At last, like a sinful soul  
At the portals of Heaven I lie,  
Never to walk with the blest,  
Ah, never ! . . . only to die.

## XIX.

## HESPERIDES.

If thy soul, Herrick, dwelt with me,  
This is what my songs would be :

Hints of our sea-breezes, blent  
With odors from the Orient ;  
Indian vessels deep with spice ;  
Star-showers from the Norland ice ;  
Wine-red jewels that seem to hold  
Fire, but only burn with cold ;  
Antique goblets, strangely wrought,  
Filled with the wine of happy thought ;  
Bridal measures, vain regrets,  
Laburnum buds and violets ;  
Hopeful as the break of day ;  
Clear as crystal ; new as May ;  
Musical as brooks that run  
O'er yellow shallows in the sun ;

Soft as the satin fringe that shades  
The eyelids of thy fragrant maids;  
Brief as thy lyrics, Herrick, are,  
And polished as the bosom of a star.



## XX.

## THE POET.

He wasted precious gifts of God.

But here's the limit of his woes,

Sleep rest him! See, above him grows

The very grass whereon he trod.

He walked with demons, ghosts, and things

Unsightly . . . terrors and despairs,

And ever in the blackened airs

A dismal raven flapped its wings.

Behold! within this narrow grave

Is shut the baser part of him.

Behold! he could not wholly dim

The genius gracious heaven gave—

For strains of music here and there,

Weird murmurings, vague prophetic tones,

Are blown across the silent zones

Forever in the midnight air.

## XXI.

## THE ROBIN.

[*L'Envoi.*]

FROM out the blossomed cherry-tops  
Sing, blithesome Robin, chant and sing;  
With chirp, and trill, and magic-stops  
Win thou the listening ear of Spring!

For while thou lingerest in delight,  
An idle poet, with thy rhyme,  
The summer hours will take their flight  
And leave thee in a barren clime.

Not all the Autumn's brittle gold,  
Nor sun, nor moon, nor star shall bring  
The jocund spirit which of old  
Made it an easy joy to sing!

So said a poet—having lost  
The precious time when he was young—  
Now wandering by the wintry coast  
With empty heart and silent tongue.

III.

THE BALLAD OF BABIE BELL  
AND OTHER POEMS.



# THE BALLAD OF BABIE BELL,

AND OTHER POEMS.

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## THE BALLAD OF BABIE BELL.

### I.

HAVE you not heard the poets tell  
How came the dainty Babie Bell  
    Into this world of ours ?  
The gates of heaven were left ajar :  
With folded hands and dreamy eyes,  
Wandering out of Paradise,  
She saw this planet, like a star,  
    Hung in the glistening depths of even—  
Its bridges, running to and fro,  
O'er which the white-winged Angels go,  
    Bearing the holy Dead to heaven !  
She touched a bridge of flowers—those feet,  
So light they did not bend the bells  
Of the celestial asphodels !

They fell like dew upon the flowers,  
Then all the air grew strangely sweet !  
And thus came dainty Babie Bell  
    Into this world of ours.

## II.

She came and brought delicious May.  
    The swallows built beneath the eaves ;  
    Like sunlight in and out the leaves,  
The robins went, the live-long day ;  
The lily swung its noiseless bell,  
    And o'er the porch the trembling vine  
    Seemed bursting with its veins of wine :  
How sweetly, softly, twilight fell !  
O, earth was full of singing-birds,  
And opening spring-tide flowers,  
When the dainty Babie Bell  
    Came to this world of ours !

## III.

O Babie, dainty Babie Bell,  
How fair she grew from day to day !  
    What woman-nature filled her eyes,  
What poetry within them lay !

Those deep and tender twilight eyes,  
    So full of meaning, pure and bright  
    As if she yet stood in the light  
Of those oped gates of Paradise!  
And so we loved her more and more :  
Ah, never in our hearts before  
    Was love so lovely born :  
We felt we had a link between  
This real world and that unseen—  
    The land beyond the morn !  
And for the love of those dear eyes,  
For love of her whom God led forth,  
(The mother's being ceased on earth  
When Babie came from Paradise)—  
For love of Him who smote our lives,  
    And woke the chords of joy and pain,  
We said, *Dear Christ!*—our hearts bent down  
    Like violets after rain.

## IV.

And now the orchards, which were white  
    And red with blossoms when she came,  
Were rich in autumn's mellow prime :

The clustered apples burnt like flame,  
The soft-cheeked peaches blushed and fell,  
The ivory chestnut burst its shell,  
The grapes hung purpling in the grange :  
And time wrought just as rich a change  
In little Babie Bell.

Her lissome form more perfect grew,  
And in her features we could trace,  
In softened curves, her mother's face !  
Her angel-nature ripened too.  
We thought her lovely when she came,  
But she was holy, saintly now . . . .  
Around her pale angelic brow  
We saw a slender ring of flame !

## v.

God's hand had taken away the seal  
That held the portals of her speech ;  
And oft she said a few strange words  
Whose meaning lay beyond our reach.  
She never was a child to us,  
We never held her being's key :  
We could not teach her holy things :  
She was Christ's self in purity.



## VI.

It came upon us by degrees :  
We saw its shadow ere it fell,  
The knowledge that our God had sent  
His messenger for Babie Bell.  
We shuddered with unlanguage'd pain,  
And all our hopes were changed to fears,  
And all our thoughts ran into tears  
Like sunshine into rain.  
We cried aloud in our belief,  
' O, smite us gently, gently, God !  
Teach us to bend and kiss the rod,  
And perfect grow through grief.'  
Ah, how we loved her, God can tell ;  
Her heart was folded deep in ours.  
Our hearts are broken, Babie Bell !

## VII.

At last he came, the messenger,  
The messenger from unseen lands :  
And what did dainty Babie Bell ?  
She only crossed her little hands,  
She only looked more meek and fair !  
We parted back her silken hair :

We wove the roses round her brow,  
White buds, the summer's drifted snow—  
Wrapped her from head to foot in flowers!  
And thus went dainty Babie Bell  
    Out of this world of ours!

## PISCATAQUA RIVER.

1860.

THOU singest by the gleaming isles,  
By woods and fields of corn,  
Thou singest, and the heaven smiles  
Upon my birthday morn.

But I within a city, I,  
So full of vague unrest,  
Would almost give my life to lie  
An hour upon thy breast.

To let the wherry listless go,  
And, wrapped in dreamy joy,  
Dip, and surge idly to and fro,  
Like the red harbor-buoy !

To sit in happy indolence,  
To rest upon the oars,  
And catch the heavy earthy scents  
That blow from summer shores :

To see the rounded sun go down,  
And with its parting fires  
Light up the windows of the town  
And burn the tapering spires !

And then to hear the muffled tolls  
From steeples slim and white,  
And watch, among the Isles of Shoals,  
The Beacon's orange light.

O River ! flowing to the main  
Through woods and fields of corn,  
Hear thou my longing and my pain  
This sunny birthday morn :

And take this song which sorrow shapes  
To music like thine own,  
And sing it to the cliffs and capes  
And crags where I am known !

## PYTHAGORAS.

ABOVE the petty passions of the crowd  
I stand in frozen marble like a god,  
Inviolatè, and ancient as the moon.  
The thing I am, and not the thing Man is,  
Fills my deep dreaming. Let him moan and  
die ;  
For he is dust that shall be laid again :  
I know my own creation was divine.  
Strewn on the breezy continents I see  
The veinèd shells and burnished scales which  
once  
Enwrapped my being—husks that had their use ;  
I brood on all the shapes I must attain  
Before I reach the Perfect, which is God,  
And dream my dream, and let the rabble go ;  
For I am of the mountains and the sea,  
The deserts, and the caverns in the earth,  
The catacombs and fragments of old worlds.

I was a spirit on the mountain-tops,  
A perfume in the valleys, a simoom  
On arid deserts, a nomadic wind  
Roaming the universe, a tireless Voice.  
I was ere Romulus and Remus were;  
I was ere Nineveh and Babylon;  
I was, and am, and evermore shall be,  
Progressing, never reaching to the end.

A hundred years I trembled in the grass,  
The delicate trefoil that muffled warm  
A slope on Ida; for a hundred years  
Moved in the purple gyre of those dark flowers  
The Grecian women strew upon the dead.  
Under the earth, in fragrant glooms, I dwelt;  
Then in the veins and sinews of a pine  
On a lone isle, where, from the Cyclades,  
A mighty wind, like a leviathan,  
Ploughed through the brine, and from those  
solitudes

Sent Silence, frightened. To and fro I swayed,  
Drawing the sunshine from the stooping clouds.  
Suns came and went, and many a mystic moon,  
Orbing and waning, and fierce meteors,  
Leaving their lurid ghosts to haunt the night.  
I heard loud voices by the sounding shore,

The stormy sea-gods, and from fluted conchs  
Wild music, and strange shadows floated by,  
Some moaning and some singing. So the  
years

Clustered about me, till the hand of God  
Let down the lightning from a sultry sky,  
Splintered the pine and split the iron rock ;  
And from my odorous prison-house a bird,  
I in its bosom, darted : so we fled,  
Turning the brittle edge of one high wave,  
Island and tree and sea-gods left behind !

Free as the air from zone to zone I flew,  
Far from the tumult to the quiet gates  
Of daybreak ; and beneath me I beheld  
Vineyards, and rivers that like silver threads  
Ran through the green and gold of pasture-lands,  
And here and there a hamlet, a white rose,  
And here and there a city, whose slim spires  
And palace-roofs and swollen domes uprose  
Like scintillant stalagmites in the sun ;  
I saw huge navies battling with a storm  
By ragged reefs along the desolate coasts,  
And lazy merchantmen, that crawled, like flies,  
Over the blue enamel of the sea  
To India or the icy Labradors.

A century was as a single day.

What is a day to an immortal soul?

A breath, no more. And yet I hold one hour  
Beyond all price—that hour when from the sky  
I circled near and nearer to the earth,  
Nearer and nearer, till I brushed my wings  
Against the pointed chestnuts, where a stream  
That foamed and chattered over pebbly shoals,  
Fled through the briony, and with a shout  
Leaped headlong down a precipice; and there,  
Gathering wild-flowers in the cool ravine,  
Wandered a woman more divinely shaped  
Than any of the creatures of the air,  
Or river-goddesses, or restless shades  
Of noble matrons marvellous in their time  
For beauty and great suffering; and I sung,  
I charmed her thought, I gave her dreams, and  
then

Down from the dewy atmosphere I stole  
And nestled in her bosom. There I slept  
From moon to moon, while in her eyes a  
thought  
Grew sweet and sweeter, deepening like the  
dawn—

A mystical forewarning! When the stream,



Breaking through leafless brambles and dead  
leaves,

Piped shriller treble, and from chestnut boughs  
The fruit dropped noiseless through the autumn  
night,

I gave a quick, low cry, as infants do :

We weep when we are born, not when we die !

So was it destined ; and thus came I here,

To walk the earth and wear the form of Man,

To suffer bravely as becomes my state,

One step, one grade, one cycle nearer God.

And knowing these things, can I stoop to fret,

And lie, and haggle in the market-place,

Give dross for dross, or everything for naught ?

No ! let me sit above the crowd, and sing,

Waiting with hope for that miraculous change

Which seems like sleep ; and though I waiting  
starve,

I cannot kiss the idols that are set

By every gate, in every street and park ;

I cannot fawn, I cannot soil my soul :

For I am of the mountains and the sea,

The deserts and the caverns in the earth,

The catacombs and fragments of old worlds.

## A BALLAD OF NANTUCKET.

‘WHERE go you, pretty Maggie,  
Where go you in the rain?  
I go to ask the sailors  
Who sailed the Spanish main,

‘If they have seen my Willie,  
If he’ll come back to me—  
It is so sad to have him  
A-sailing on the sea!’

‘O Maggie, pretty Maggie,  
Turn back to yonder town;  
Your Willie’s in the ocean,  
A hundred fathoms down!

‘ His hair is turned to sea-kelp,  
His eyes are changed to stones,  
And twice two years have knitted  
The coral round his bones !

‘ The blossoms and the clover  
Shall bloom and bloom again,  
But never shall your lover  
Come o’er the Spanish main !’

But Maggie never heeded,  
For mournfully said she :  
‘ It is so sad to have him  
A-sailing on the sea !’

She left me in the darkness :  
I heard the sea-gulls screech,  
And burly winds were growling  
With breakers on the beach !

The bells of old Nantucket,  
What touching things they said,  
When Maggie lay a-sleeping  
With lilies round her head !

The parson preached a sermon,  
And prayed and preached again—  
But she had gone to Willie  
Across the Spanish main!

## THE TRAGEDY.

## LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS.

THE "*Dame with the Camelias*"—

I think that was the play ;  
The house was packed from pit to dome  
With the gallant and the gay,  
Who had come to see the Tragedy,  
And while the hours away.

There was the oily Exquisite,  
With gloves and glass sublime ;  
There was the grave Historian,  
And there the man of Rhyme,  
And the surly Critic, front to front,  
To see the play of Crime.

And there was pompous Ignorance,  
And Vice in Honiton lace ;

Sir Croesus and Sir Pandarus—

And the music played apace.

But of all that crowd I only saw

A single, single face !

That of a girl whom I had known

In the summers long ago,

When her breath was like the new-mown hay,

Or the sweetest flowers that grow—

When her heart was light, and her soul was  
white

As the winter's driven snow.

'Twas in our own New England

She breathed the morning air ;

'Twas the sunshine of New England

That blended with her hair ;

And modesty and purity

Walked with her everywhere !

All day like a ray of light she played

About old Harvey's mill ;

And her grandsire held her on his knee

In the evenings long and still,

And told her tales of Lexington,

And the trench at Bunker's Hill—

And of the painted Wamponsags,  
The Indians who of yore  
Builded their wigwams out of bark  
In the woods of Sagamore ;  
And how the godly Puritans  
Burnt witches by the score !

Or, touching on his sailor-life,  
He told how, years ago,  
In the dark of a cruel winter night,  
In the rain and sleet and snow,  
The good bark *Martha Jane* went down  
On the rocks off Holmes' Ho' !

The years flew by, and the maiden grew  
Like a harebell in the glade ;  
The chestnut shadows crept in her eyes—  
Sweet eyes that were not afraid  
To look to heaven at morn or even,  
Or any time she prayed !

She walked with him to the village church,  
And his eyes would fill with pride  
To see her walk with the man she loved—  
To see them side by side !

Dear Heaven ! she were an angel now  
If she had only died.

If she had only died ? Alas !

How keen must be the woe  
That makes it better one should lie  
Where the sunshine cannot go,  
Than to live in this sunny world of ours,  
Where the happy blossoms blow !

Would she had wed some country clown  
Before the luckless day  
When her cousin came to that lowly home—  
Her cousin Richard May,  
With his city airs and handsome eyes,  
To lead her soul astray !

One night they left the cottage—  
One night in the mist and rain ;  
And the old man never saw his child  
Nor Richard May again ;  
Never saw his pet in the clover patch,  
In the meadow, nor the lane.

Ah ! never was a heart so torn  
Since this wild world began,



As day by day he looked for her,  
This pitiful old man.  
“Where is Miriam gone?” he said,  
This pitiful old man.

Many a dreary winter came,  
And he had passed away;  
And we never heard of her who fled  
In the night with Richard May;  
Never knew if she were alive or dead—  
Till I met her at the play!

And there she sat with her great brown eyes,  
They wore a troubled look;  
And I read the history of her life  
As it were an open book;  
And saw her Soul, like a slimy thing  
In the bottom of a brook.

There she sat in her rustling silk,  
With diamonds on her wrist,  
And on her brow a burning thread  
Of pearl and amethyst.  
“A cheat, a gilded grief!” I said,  
And my eyes were filled with mist.

I could not see the players play,  
I heard the music moan ;  
It moaned like a dismal autumn wind,  
That dies in the woods alone ;  
And when it stopped I heard it still,  
The mournful monotone !

What if the Count were true or false ?  
I did not care, not I ;  
What if Camille for Armand died ?  
I did not see her die.  
There sat a woman opposite  
Who held me with her eye !

The great green curtain fell on all,  
On laugh, and wine, and woe,  
Just as death some day will fall  
'Twixt us and life, I know !  
The play was done, the bitter play,  
And the people turned to go.

And did they see the Tragedy ?  
They saw the painted scene ;  
They saw Armand, the jealous fool,  
And the sick Parisian queen ;

But they did not see the Tragedy—  
The one I saw, I mean !

They did not see that cold-cut face,  
Those braids of golden hair ;  
Or, seeing her jewels, only said,  
“ The lady’s rich and fair.”  
But I tell you, ’twas the Play of Life,  
And that woman played Despair !

## HAUNTED.

A NOISOME mildewed vine  
Crawls to the rotting eaves;  
The gate has dropped from the rusty hinge  
And the walks are stamped with leaves.

Close by the shattered fence  
The red-clay road runs by  
To a haunted wood, where the hemlocks groan  
And the willows sob and sigh.

Among the dank lush flowers  
The spiteful firefly glows,  
And a woman steals by the stagnant pond  
Wrapped in her burial clothes.

There's a dark blue scar on her throat,  
And ever she makes a moan,  
And the humid lizards shine in the grass,  
And the lichens weep on the stone ;

And the Moon shrinks in a cloud,  
And the traveller shakes with fear,  
And an Owl on the skirts of the wood  
Hoots, and says, Do you hear ?

Go not there at night,  
For a spell hangs over all—  
The palsied elms, and the dismal road,  
And the broken garden-wall.

O, go not there at night,  
For a curse is on the place ;  
Go not there, for fear you meet  
The Murdered face to face !

## PAMPINEA.

## AN IDYL.

LYING by the summer sea  
I had a dream of Italy.

Chalky cliffs and miles of sand,  
Mossy reefs and salty caves,  
Then the sparkling emerald waves,  
Faded; and I seemed to stand,  
Myself a languid Florentine,  
In the heart of that fair land.  
And in a garden cool and green,  
Boccaccio's own enchanted place,  
I met Pampinea face to face—  
A maid so lovely that to see  
Her smile is to know Italy!

Her hair was like a coronet  
Upon her Grecian forehead set,  
Where one gem glistened sunnily  
Like Venice, when first seen at sea.  
I saw within her violet eyes  
The starlight of Italian skies,  
And on her brow and breast and hand  
The olive of her native land!

And knowing how in other times  
Her lips were ripe with Tuscan rhymes  
Of love and wine and dance, I spread  
My mantle by an almond-tree,  
“And here, beneath the rose,” I said,  
“I’ll hear thy Tuscan melody.”  
I heard a tale that was not told  
In those ten dreamy days of old,  
When Heaven, for some divine offence,  
Smote Florence with the pestilence ;  
And in that garden’s odorous shade,  
The dames of the Decameron,  
With each a loyal lover, strayed,  
To laugh and sing, at sorest need,  
To lie in the lilies in the sun  
With glint of plume and golden brede !

And while she whispered in my ear,  
The pleasant Arno murmured near,  
The dewy, slim chameleons run  
Through twenty colors in the sun ;  
The breezes broke the fountain's glass,  
And woke æolian melodies,  
And shook from out the scented trees  
The bleached lemon-blossoms on the grass.  
The tale ? I have forgot the tale—  
A Lady all for love forlorn,  
A rose-bud, and a nightingale  
That bruised his bosom on the thorn ;  
A pot of rubies buried deep,  
A glen, a corpse, a child asleep,  
A Monk, that was no monk at all,  
In the moonlight by a castle wall.

Now while the large-eyed Tuscan wove  
The gilded thread of her romance—  
Which I have lost by grievous chance—  
The one dear woman that I love,  
Beside me in our sea-side nook,  
Closed a white finger in her book,  
Half vexed that she should read, and weep  
For Petrarch, to a man asleep !



And scorning me, so tame and cold,  
She rose, and wandered down the shore,  
Her wine-dark drapery, fold in fold,  
Imprisoned by an ivory hand ;  
And on a ledge of oölite, half in sand,  
She stood, and looked at Appledore.

And waking, I beheld her there  
Sea-dreaming in the moted air,  
A siren lithe and debonair,  
With wristlets woven of scarlet weeds,  
And oblong lucent amber beads  
Of sea-kelp shining in her hair.  
And as I thought of dreams, and how  
The something in us never sleeps,  
But laughs, or sings, or moans, or weeps,  
She turned—and on her breast and brow  
I saw the tint that seemed not won  
From kisses of New England sun ;  
I saw on brow and breast and hand  
The olive of a sunnier land !  
She turned—and, lo ! within her eyes  
There lay the starlight of Italian skies !  
Most dreams are dark, beyond the range  
Of reason ; oft we cannot tell

If they are born of heaven or hell :  
But to my soul it seems not strange  
That, lying by the summer sea,  
With that dark woman watching me,  
I slept and dreamed of Italy !

## A GREAT MAN'S DEATH.

TO-DAY a god died. Never any more  
Shall man look on him. Never any more,  
In hall or senate, shall his eloquent voice  
Give hope to a sick nation. In his prime  
Not all the world could daunt him; yet a ghost  
A poor mute ghost, a something we call Death,  
Has silenced him for ever. Let the land  
Look for his peer: he has not yet been found.

A callow bird, of not so many days  
As there are leaves upon the wildling rose,  
Chirps from yon sycamore; this violet  
Sprung up an hour since from the fibrous earth:  
At noon the rain fell, and to-night the sun  
Will sink with its old splendor in the sea,—  
And yet to-day a god died. . . . Nature smiles  
On our mortality. A sparrow's death,  
Or the unnoticed falling of a leaf,  
Is more to her than when a great man dies!

KATHIE MORRIS.

AN OLD MAN'S POEM.

1.

AN! fine it was that April time, when gentle  
winds were blowing,  
To hunt for pale arbutus-blooms that hide  
beneath the leaves,  
To hear the slanting rain come down, and see  
the clover growing,  
And watch the airy swallows as they darted  
round the eaves!

2.

You wonder why I dream to-night of clover  
that was growing  
So many years ago, my wife, when we were in  
our prime;

For, hark! the wind is in the flue, and Johnny  
says 'tis snowing,  
And through the storm the clanging bells ring  
in the Christmas time.

## 3.

I cannot tell, but something sweet about my  
heart is clinging.  
A vision and a memory—'tis little that I mind  
The weary wintry weather, for I hear the  
robins singing,  
And the petals of the apple-blooms are ruffled  
in the wind!

## 4.

It was a sunny morn in May, and in the fra-  
grant meadow  
I lay, and dreamed of one fair face, as fair and  
fresh as spring:  
Would Kathie Morris love me? then in sun-  
shine and in shadow  
I built up lofty castles on a golden wedding-  
ring!

## 5.

O, sweet it was to dream of her, the soldier's  
    only daughter,  
The pretty pious Puritan, that flirted so with  
    Will;  
The music of her winsome mouth was like the  
    laughing water  
That broke in silvery syllables by Farmer  
    Philip's mill.

## 6.

And Will had gone away to sea; he did not  
    leave her grieving;  
Her bonny heart was not for him, so reckless  
    and so vain;  
And Will turned out a buccaneer, and hanged  
    was he for thieving  
And scuttling helpless ships that sailed across  
    the Spanish Main.

## 7.

And I had come to grief for her, the scornful  
    village beauty,  
For, oh! she had a witty tongue could cut you  
    like a knife;

She scorned me with her haughty eyes, and I,  
in bounden duty,  
Did love her—loved her more for that, and  
wearied of my life!

## 8.

And yet 'twas sweet to dream of her, to think  
her wavy tresses  
Might rest some happy, happy day, like sun-  
shine, on my cheek;  
The idle winds that fanned my brow I dreamed  
were her caresses,  
And in the robin's twitterings I heard my  
sweetheart speak.

## 9.

And as I lay and thought of her, her fairy face  
adorning  
With lover's fancies, treasuring the slightest  
word she'd said,  
'Twas Kathie broke upon me like a blushing  
summer morning,  
And a half-blown rosy clover reddened under-  
neath her tread!

## 10.

Then I glanced up at Kathie, and her eyes were  
full of laughter :

‘O, Kathie, Kathie Morris, I am lying at your  
feet ;

Bend above me, say you love me, that you’ll  
love me ever after,

Or let me lie and die here, in the fragrant meadow-sweet !’

## 11.

And then I turned my face away, and trembled  
at my daring,

For wildly, wildly had I spoke, with flashing  
cheek and eye ;

And there was silence ; I looked up, all pallid  
and despairing,

For fear she’d take me at my word, and leave  
me there to die.

## 12.

The modest lashes of her eyes upon her cheeks  
were drooping,

Her merciless white fingers tore a blushing bud  
apart ;



Then, quick as lightning, Kathie came, and  
    kneeling half and stooping,  
She hid her bonny, bonny face against my  
    beating heart.

## 13.

O, nestle, nestle, nestle there! the heart would  
    give thee greeting;  
Lie thou there, all trustfully, in trouble and in  
    pain;  
This breast shall shield thee from the storm  
    and bear its bitter beating,  
These arms shall hold thee tenderly in sunshine  
    and in rain!

## 14.

Old sexton! set your chimes in tune, and let  
    there be no snarling,  
Ring out a joyous wedding-hymn to all the  
    listening air;  
And, girls, strew roses as she comes, the scorn-  
    ful, brown-eyed darling—  
A princess, by the wavy gold and glistening  
    of her hair!

## 15.

Hark ! hear the bells. The Christmas bells ? O,  
no ; who set them ringing ?  
I think I hear our bridal-bells, and I with joy  
am blind ;  
I smell the clover in the fields, I hear the robins  
singing.  
And the petals of the apple-blooms are ruffled  
in the wind !

## 16.

Ah ! Kathie, you've been true to me in fair and  
cloudy weather ;  
Our Father has been good to us when we've  
been sorely tried :  
I pray to Him, when we must die, that we may  
die together,  
And slumber softly underneath the clover, side  
by side.

## LAMIA.

‘ Go on your way, and let me pass.

    You stop a wild despair,

I would that I were turned to brass

    Like that grim dragon there,

‘ Which, couchant by the postern gate,

    In weather foul or fair,

Looks down serenely desolate,

    And nothing does but stare !

‘ Ah, what’s to me the burgeoned year,

    The sad leaf or the gay ?

Let Launcelot and Queen Guinevere

    Their falcons fly this day.

‘ Twill be as royal sport, pardie,  
As falconers have tried  
At Astolat—but let me be !  
I would that I had died.

‘ I met a woman in the glade :  
Her hair was soft and brown,  
And long bent silken lashes weighed  
Her ivory eyelids down.

‘ I kissed her hand, I called her blest,  
I held her leal and fair—  
She turned to shadow on my breast,  
And melted in the air !

‘ And, lo ! about me, fold on fold,  
A writhing serpent hung—  
An eye of jet, a skin of gold,  
A garnet for a tongue !

‘ O, let the petted falcons fly  
Right merry in the sun ;  
But let me be ! for I shall die  
Before the year is done.’

## INVOCATION TO SLEEP.

## I.

THERE is a rest for all things. On still nights  
There is a folding of a million wings—  
The swarming honey-bees in unknown woods,  
The speckled butterflies, and downy broods  
In dizzy poplar heights :  
Rest for innumerable nameless things,  
Rest for the creatures underneath the Sea,  
And in the Earth, and in the starry Air . . . ,  
Why will it not unburden me of care ?  
It comes to meaner things than my despair.  
O weary, weary night, that brings no rest to  
me !

## II.

Spirit of dreams and silvern memories,

Delicate Sleep!

One who is sickening of his tiresome days,

Brings thee a soul that he would have thee  
keep

A captive in thy mystical domain,

With Puck and Ariel, and the grotesque train

That do inhabit slumber. Give his sight

Immortal shapes, and bring to him again

His Psyche that went out into the night!

## III.

Thou who dost hold the priceless keys of rest,  
Strew lotus-leaves and poppies on my breast,

And bear me to thy castle in the land

Touched with all colors like a burning west—

The Castle of Vision, where the feet of thought

Wander at will upon enchanted ground,

Making no sound

In all the corridors . . . .

The bell sleeps in the belfry—from its tongue

A drowsy murmur floats into the air,

Like thistle-down. Slumber is everywhere.  
The rook's asleep, and, in its dreaming, caws;  
And silence mopes where nightingales have  
    sung;  
The Sirens lie in grottos cool and deep :  
    The Naiads in the streams:  
But I, in chilling twilight, stand and wait  
On the portcullis, at thy castle gate,  
Yearning to see the golden door of dreams  
Turn on its noiseless hinges, delicate Sleep !

## SEADRIFT.

SEE where she stands, on the wet sea-sands,  
Looking across the water :  
Wild is the night, but wilder still  
The face of the fisher's daughter !

What does she there, in the lightning's glare,  
What does she there, I wonder ?  
What dread demon drags her forth  
In the night and wind and thunder ?

Is it the ghost that haunts this coast ?—  
The cruel waves mount higher,  
And the beacon pierces the stormy dark  
With its javelin of fire !



Beyond the light of the beacon bright  
A merchantman is tacking  
The hoarse wind whistling through the shrouds,  
And the brittle topmasts cracking.

The sea it moans over dead men's bones,  
The sea it foams in anger ;  
The curlews swoop through the resonant air  
With a warning cry of danger.

The star-fish clings to the sea-weed's rings  
In a vague, dumb sense of peril ;  
And the spray, with its phantom-fingers, grasps  
At the mullein dry and sterile.

O, who is she that stands by the sea,  
In the lightning's glare, undaunted ?—  
Seems this now like the coast of hell  
By one white spirit haunted !

The night drags by ; and the breakers die  
Along the ragged ledges ;  
The robin stirs in its drenchéd nest,  
The hawthorn blooms on the hedges.

In shimmering lines, through the sullen pines,  
The stealthy morn advances ;  
And the heavy sea-fog straggles back  
Before those bristling lances !

Still she stands on the wet sea-sands ;  
The morning breaks above her,  
And the corpse of a sailor gleams on the  
rocks—  
What if it were her lover ?

## INFELICISSIMUS.

## I.

I WALKED with him one melancholy night  
Down by the sea, along the lonely strands,  
While in the dreary heaven the Northern Light  
Beckoned with flaming hands—

## II.

Beckoned and vanished, like a woeful ghost  
That fain would lure us to some dismal wood,  
And tell us tales of ships that have been lost,  
Of violence and blood.

## III.

And where yon rock o'erhangs the angry froth,  
We sat together as the night went by,  
Watching the great star-bear that in the North  
Guarded the midnight sky.

## IV.

And while the moonlight wrought its miracles,  
Drenching the world with silent silver rain,  
He spoke of life and its tumultuous ills;  
He told me of his pain.

## V.

He said his soul was like the troubled sea  
With autumn brooding over it : and then  
Spoke of his hopes, of what he yearned to be,  
And what he might have been.

## VI.

‘I hope,’ he said, ‘I hope for peace at last,  
I only ask for peace ! My god is Ease !  
Day after day some rude Iconoclast  
Breaks all my images.

## VII.

‘There is a better life than I have known—  
A surer, purer, larger life than this :  
There is another, a celestial zone,  
Where I shall know of bliss.’

## VIII.

So, close his eyes, and cross his helpless hands,  
And lay the year's last flowers upon his breast;  
For time and death have stayed the golden  
sands  
That ran with such unrest !

## IX.

You weep : I smile : I know that he is dead,  
So is his passion, and 'tis better so !  
Take him, O Earth, and round his lovely head  
Let countless roses blow !

## THE QUEEN'S RIDE.

*An Invitation.*

'Tis that fair time of year,  
Lady mine,  
When stately Guinevere,  
In her sea-green robe and hood,  
Went a-riding through the wood,  
Lady mine.

And as the Queen did ride,  
Lady mine,  
Sir Launcelot at her side  
Laughed and chatted, bending over,  
Half her friend and all her lover !  
Lady mine.

And as they rode along,  
    Lady mine,  
The throstle gave them song,  
And the buds peeped through the grass  
To see youth and beauty pass!  
    Lady mine.

And on, through deathless time,  
    Lady mine,  
These lovers in their prime,  
(Two fairy ghosts together!)  
Ride, with sea-green robe, and feather!  
    Lady mine.

And so we two will ride,  
    Lady mine,  
At your pleasure, side by side,  
Laugh and chat; I bending over,  
Half your friend and all your lover!  
    Lady mine.

But if you like not this,  
    Lady mine,

And take my love amiss,  
Then I'll ride unto the end,  
Half your lover, all your friend !  
Lady mine.

So, come which way you will,  
Lady mine,  
Vale, upland, plain and hill  
Wait your coming. For one day  
Loose the bridle, and away !  
Lady mine.



## LANDER.

## I.

CLOSE his bleak eyes—they shall no more  
Flash victory where the cannon roar;  
And lay the battered sabre at his side,  
(His to the last, for so he would have died!)  
Though he no more may pluck from out its  
sheath

The sinewy lightning that dealt traitors death.  
Lead the worn war-horse by the pluméd bier—  
Even his horse, now he is dead, is dear!

## II.

Take him, New England, now his work is done.  
He fought the Good Fight valiantly—and won.

Speak of his daring. This man held his blood  
Cheaper than water for the Nation's good.

Rich Mountain, Fairfax, Romney—he was  
there.

Speak of him gently, of his mien, his air ;  
How true he was, how his strong heart could  
bend

With sorrow, like a woman's, for a friend :

Intolerant of every mean desire ;

Ice where he liked not ; where he loved, all  
fire.

### III.

Take him, New England, gently. Other days,  
Peaceful and prosperous, shall give him praise.  
How will our children's children breathe his  
name,

Bright on the shadowy muster-roll of fame !

Take him, New England, gently ; you can fold  
No purer patriot in your soft brown mould.

So, on New England's bosom, let him lie,  
Sleeping awhile—as if the Good could die !

IV.

THE SET OF TURQUOISE.



# THE SET OF TURQUOISE.

## A DRAMATIC SKETCH.

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### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COUNT OF LARA, *A poor nobleman.*

BEATRICE, . . . *His wife.*

MIRIAM,        }  
JACINTA,        } . . . *Her dressing-maids.*

A PAGE, *for the occasion.*

*The scene is laid in the vicinity of Mantua.*

SCENE I.—COUNT of LARA'S *villa.* *A balcony overlooking the garden. Moonlight. LARA and BEATRICE.*

LARA.

THE third moon of our marriage, Beatrice !  
It hangs in the still twilight, large and full,  
Like a ripe orange.

BEATRICE.

Like an orange? yes,  
But not so red, Count. Then it has no stem,  
And ripened out of nothing.

LARA.

Critical!  
Make thou a neater poesy for the moon.

BEATRICE.

Now, as 't is hidden by those drifts of cloud,  
With one thin edge just glimmering through  
the dark,  
'Tis like some strange, rich jewel of the east,  
In the cleft side of a mountain.

LARA.

Not unlike!

BEATRICE.

And that reminds me—speaking of jewels—  
love,  
There is a set of turquoise at Malan's,

Ear-drops and bracelets and a necklace—ah !  
If they were mine !

LARA.

And so they should be, dear,  
Were I Aladdin, and had slaves o' the lamp  
To fetch me ingots. Why, then, Beatrice,  
All Persia's turquoise-quarries should be yours,  
Although your hand is heavy now with gems  
That tear my lips when I would kiss its white-  
ness.

Oh ! so you pout ! Why make that full-blown  
rose  
Into a bud again ?

BEATRICE.

You love me not.

LARA.

A coquette's song.

BEATRICE.

I sing it.

LARA.

A poor song.

BEATRICE.

You love me not, or love me over-much,  
Which makes you jealous of the gems I wear!  
You do not deck me as becomes our state,  
For fear my grandeur should besiege the eyes  
Of Monte, Clari, Marcus, and the rest—  
A precious set! You're jealous, Sir!

LARA.

Not I.  
I love you.

BEATRICE.

Why, that is as easy said  
As any three short words; takes no more  
breath  
To say, 'I hate you.' What, Sir, have I lived  
Three times four weeks your wedded loyal  
wife,  
And do not know your follies? I will wager  
(If I could trap his countship into this!) [*Aside.*]  
The rarest kisses I know how to give  
Against the turquoise, that within a month  
You'll grow so jealous—and without a cause,



Or with a reason thin as window-glass—  
That you will ache to kill me !

LARA.

Will you so ?  
And I—let us clasp hands and kiss on it.

BEATRICE.

Clasp hands, Sir Trustful ; but not kiss—nay,  
    nay !  
I will not pay my forfeit till I lose.

LARA.

And I'll not lose the forfeit.

BEATRICE.

We shall see.

BEATRICE *enters the house singing :*

*There was an old earl and he wed a young wife,  
    Heigh ho, the bonny.  
And he was as jealous as Death is of Life,  
    Heigh ho, the nonny !*

*Kings saw her, and sighed ;  
And wan lovers died,  
But no one could win the bright honey  
That lay on the lips of the bonny  
Young bride,  
Until Cupid, the rover, a-hearting would go,  
Then—heigh ho !* [Exit.]

## LARA.

She has as many fancies as the wind  
Which now, like slumber, lies 'mong spiey  
isles,  
Then suddenly blows white furrows in the sea!  
Lovely and dangerous is my leopardess.  
To-day, low-lying at my feet ; to-morrow,  
With great eyes flashing, threatening doleful  
death—  
With strokes like velvet ! She's no common  
clay,  
But fire and dew and marble. I'll not throw  
So rare a wonder in the lap o' the world !  
Jealous ? I am not jealous—though they say  
Some sorts of love breed jealousy. And yet,  
I would I had not wagered ; it implies

Doubt. If I doubted? Pshaw! I'll walk  
awhile

And let the cool air fan me. [*Paces the balcony.*]

'Twas not wise.

'Tis only Folly with its cap and bells

Can jest with sad things. She seemed earnest,  
too.

What if, to pique me, she should over-step

The pale of modesty, and give bold eyes

(I could not bear that, nay, not even that!)

To Marc or Claudian? Why, such things have  
been

And no sin dreamed of. I will watch her  
close.

There, now, I wrong her. She is wild enough,

Playing the empress in her honeymoons:

But untamed falcons will not wear the hood

Nor sit on the wrist, at bidding. Yet if she,

To win the turquoise of me, if she should—

O! curséd jewels! would that they were  
hung

About the glistening neck of some mer-  
maiden

A thousand fathoms underneath the sea!

SCENE II.—*A garden: the villa seen in the background. LARA stretched on the grass with a copy of Boccaccio's 'Decameron' in his hand. Sunset.*

LARA.      [*Closing the book.*]

A book for sunset—if for any time.  
Most spiey tongues and riant wit had they,  
The merry Ladies of Boccaccio!  
What tales they told of love-in-idleness,  
(Love old as earth, and yet forever new,)  
Of monks who worshipped Venus—not in  
vain;  
Of unsuspecting husbands, and gay dames  
Who held their vows but lightly—by my  
faith,  
Too much of the latter! 'Tis a sweet, bad  
book.  
I would not have my sister or my wife  
Caught by its cunning. In its mellow words  
Sin is so draped with beauty, speaks so fair,  
That naught seems wrong but Virtue! Yet, for  
all,

It is a sprightly volume, and kills care.

I need such sweet physicians. I have grown  
Sick in the mind—at swords' points with my-  
self.

I am mine own worst enemy.

And wherefore? wherefore? Beatrice is kind,  
Less fanciful, and loves me, I would swear,  
Albeit she will not kiss me till the month  
Which ends our foolish wager shall have  
passed.

A hundred years, and not a single kiss  
To spice the time with! What a freakish  
dame!

*A Page crosses the garden.*

That page again! 'Tis twice within the week  
The supple-waisted, pretty-ankled knave  
Has crossed my garden at this self-same hour,  
Trolling a canzonetta with an air  
As if he owned the villa. Why, the fop!  
He might have doffed his bonnet as he passed.  
I'll teach him better if he comes again.  
What does he at the villa? O! perchance  
He comes in the evening when his master's  
out,

To lisp soft romance in the ready ear  
Of Beatrice's dressing-maid ; but then  
She *has* one lover. Now I think she's two :  
This gaudy popinjay would make the third,  
And that's too many for an honest girl !  
If he's not Miriam's, he's Jacinta's, then ?  
I'll ask the Countess—no, I'll not do that ;  
She'd laugh at me, and vow by the Madonna  
This varlet was some noble in disguise,  
Seeking *her* favor. Then I'd let the light  
Of heaven through his doublet—I would—yes,  
That is, I would, were I a jealous man :  
But then I'm not. So he may come and go  
To Miriam—or the devil ! I'll not care.  
I would not build around my lemon-trees,  
(Though every lemon were a sphere of gold,)  
A lattice-fence, for fear the very birds  
Should sing, *You're jealous, you are jealous,*  
*Sir !*

SCENE III.—*A wooded road near the villa. The garden-gate seen on the left. LARA leaning against a tree. Evening.*

LARA.

Sorrow itself is not so hard to bear  
As the thought of sorrow coming. Airy ghosts,  
That work no mischief, terrify us more  
Than men in steel with bloody purposes.  
Death is not dreadful; 'tis the dread of  
death—

We die whene'er we think of it!

I'll not

Be cozened longer. When the page comes out  
I'll stop him, question him, and know the  
truth.

I cannot sit in the garden of a night  
But he glides by me in his jaunty dress,  
Like a fantastic phantom!—never looks  
To the right nor left, but passes gayly on,  
As if I were a statue. Soft, he comes,  
I'll make him speak, or kill him; then, in-  
deed,

It were unreasonable to ask it. Soh!  
I'll speak him gently at the first, and then—

*The Page enters by a gate in the villa-garden, and  
walks carelessly past the Count.*

Ho! pretty page, who owns you?

PAGE.

No one now.  
Once Signor Juan, but I am his no more.

LARA.

What, then, you stole from him?

PAGE.

O! no, Sir, no.  
He had so many intrigues on his hands,  
There was no sleep for me nor night nor day.  
Such carrying of love-favors and pink notes!  
He's gone abroad now, to break other hearts  
And so I left him.

LARA.

A frank knave.



PAGE.

To-night  
I've done his latest bidding—

LARA.

As you should—

PAGE.

A duty wed with pleasure—'twas to take  
A message to a countess all forlorn,  
In yonder villa.

LARA.      [*Aside.*]

Why, the devil! that's mine!  
A message to a countess all forlorn?  
[*To the Page.*] In yonder villa?

PAGE.

Ay, Sir. You can see  
The portico among the mulberries,  
Just to the left, there.

LARA.

Ay, I see, I see.  
A pretty villa. And the lady's name?

PAGE.

The lady's name, sir?

LARA.

Ay, the lady's name.

PAGE.

O! that's a secret which I cannot tell.

LARA. [*Catching him by the throat.*]

No? but you shall, though, or I'll strangle  
you!

In my strong hands your slender neck would  
snap

Like a fragile pipe-stem.

PAGE.

You are choking me!

O! loose your grasp, Sir!

LARA.

Then the name! the name!

PAGE.

Countess of Lara.

LARA.

Not her dressing-maid?

PAGE.

No, no, I said the mistress, not the maid.

LARA.

And then you lied. I never saw two eyes  
So wide and frank, but they'd a pliant tongue  
To shape a lie for them. Say you are false!  
Tell me you lie, and I will make you rich,  
I'll stuff your cap with ducats twice a year.

PAGE.

*[Smiling.]*

Well, then—I lie.

LARA.

Ay, now you lie, indeed!  
I see it in the cunning of your eyes;  
Night cannot hide the Satan leering there.

Only a little lingering fear of heaven  
Holds me from dirking you between the ribs!  
[*Hides his face in his hands.*]

PAGE. [Aside.]

Faith, then, I would I were well out of this.

LARA. [*Abstractedly.*]

Such thin divinity! So foul, so fair!

PAGE.

What would you have? I will say nothing,  
then.

LARA.

Say everything, and end it! Here is gold.  
You brought a billet to the Countess—well?  
What said the billet?

PAGE.

Take away your hand,  
And, by St. Mary, I will tell you all.  
There, now, I breathe. You will not harm me,  
Sir?

Stand six yards off, or I will not a word.  
It seems the Countess promised Signor Juan  
A set of turquoise—

LARA.            [*Startin,*

Turquoise? Ha! that's well.

PAGE.

Just so—wherewith my master was to pay  
Some gaming debts; but yester-night the cards  
Tumbled a golden mountain at his feet;  
And ere he sailed, this morning, Signor Juan  
Gave me a perfumed, amber-tinted note,  
For Countess Lara, which, with some adieus,  
Craved her remembrance morning, noon, and  
    night;  
Her prayers while gone, her smiles when he  
    returned;  
Then told his sudden fortune with the cards,  
And bade her keep the jewels. That is all.

LARA.

All? Is that all? 'T has only cracked my heart!  
A heart, I know, of little, little worth—

An ill-cut ruby, scarred and scratched before,  
But now quite broken ! I have no heart, then :  
Men should not have, when they are wronged  
like this.

Out of my sight, thou demon of bad news !  
O sip thy wine complacently to-night,  
Lie with thy mistress in a pleasant sleep,  
For thou hast done thy master (that's the  
Devil !)

This day a goodly service : thou hast sown  
The seeds of lightning that shall scathe and  
kill ! [*Exit.*]

PAGE. [*Looking after him.*]

I did not think 't would work on him like that.  
How pale he grew ! Alack ! I fear some ill  
Will come of this. I'll to the Countess now,  
And warn her of his madness. Faith, he  
foamed

I' the mouth like Guido whom they hung last  
week

(God rest him !) in the jail at Mantua,  
For killing poor Battista. Crime for crime,  
[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.—BEATRICE'S *chamber*. A *Venetian screen on the right*. As the scene opens, JACINTA places lamps on a standish, and retires to the back of the stage. BEATRICE sits on a *fauteuil* in the attitude of listening.

BEATRICE.

Hist ! that's his step. Jacinta, place the lights  
Farther away from me, and get thee gone.

[*Exit JACINTA.*]

And Miriam, child, keep you behind the screen,  
Breathing no louder than a lily does ;  
For if you stir or laugh 't will ruin all.

MIRIAM. [*Behind the screen.*]

Laugh ! I am faint with terror.

BEATRICE.

Then be still.

Move not for worlds until I touch the bell,  
Then do the thing I told you. Hush ! his step  
Sounds in the corridor, and I'm asleep !'

LARA *enters with his dress in disorder. He approaches within a few yards of BEATRICE, pauses, and looks at her.*

LARA.

Asleep!—and Guilt can slumber! Guilt can lie  
Down-lidded and soft-breathed, like Innocence!

Hath dreams as sweet as childhood's—who can  
tell?—

And paradisaal prophecies in sleep,  
Its foul heart keeping measure, as it were.  
To the silver music of a mandoline!  
Were I an artist, and did wish to paint  
A devil to perfection, I'd not limn  
A hornéd monster, with a leprous skin,  
Red-hot from Pandemonium—not I.  
But with my delicatest tints, I'd paint  
A Woman in the glamour of her youth,  
All garmented with loveliness and mystery!  
She should be sleeping in a room like this,  
With Angelos and Titians on the walls,  
The grand old masters staring grandly down,  
Draped round with folds of damask; in the alcoves,



Statues of Bacchus and Endymion,  
And Venus's blind love-child: a globed lamp  
Gilding the heavy darkness, while the odors  
Of myriad hyacinths should seem to break  
Upon her ivory bosom as she slept;  
And by her side, (as I by Beatrice,)  
Her injured lord should stand and look at her!  
[*Pauses.*]

How fair she is! Her beauty glides between  
Me and my purpose, like a pleading angel.  
Beauty—alack! 'tis that which wrecks us all;  
'Tis that we live for, die for, and are damned.  
A pretty ankle and a laughing lip—  
They cost us Eden when the world was new,  
They cheat us out of heaven every day!  
To-night they win another Soul for you,  
Master of Darkness! . . . [BEATRICE *sighs.*]

Her dream's broke, like a bubble, in a sigh.  
She'll waken soon, and that—that must not be!  
I could not kill her if she looked at me.  
I loved her, loved her, by the Saints, I did—  
I trust she prayed before she fell asleep!

[*Unsheathes a dagger.*]

BEATRICE. [*Springing up.*]

So, you are come—your dagger in your hand?  
Your lips compressed and blanchéd, and your  
    hair  
Tumbled wildly all about your eyes,  
Like a river-god's? O! love, you frighten me!  
And you are trembling. Tell me what this  
    means.

LARA.

Oh! nothing, nothing—I did think to write  
A note to Juan, to Signor Juan, my friend,  
(Your cousin and my honorable friend;)  
But finding neither ink nor paper here,  
I thought to scratch it with my dagger's point  
Upon your bosom, Madam! That is all.

BEATRICE.

You've lost your senses!

LARA.

Madam, no: I've found 'em!

BEATRICE.

Then lose them quickly, and be what you were.

LARA.

I was a fool, a dupe—a happy dupe.  
You should have kept me in my ignorance;  
For wisdom makes us wretched, king and  
clown.

Countess of Lara, you are false to me!

BEATRICE.

Now, by the Saints—

LARA.

Now, by the Saints, you are!

BEATRICE.

Upon my honor—

LARA.

On your honor? fye!  
Swear by the ocean's feathery froth, for that  
Is not so light a substance.

BEATRICE.

Hear me, love!

LARA.

Lie to that marble Io! I am sick  
To the heart with lying.

BEATRICE.

You've the ear-ache, Sir,  
Got with too much believing.

LARA.

Beatrice,  
I came to kill you.

BEATRICE.

Kiss me, Count, you mean!

LARA. [*Approaching her.*]

If killing you be kissing you, why yes.

BEATRICE.

Ho! come not near me with such threatening  
looks,

Or I'll call Miriam and Jacinta, Sir,  
And rouse the villa: 't were a pretty play  
To act before our servants!

LARA.

Call your maids!  
I'll kill them, too, and claim from Royalty  
A golden medal and a new escutcheon,  
For slaying three she-dragons—but you first!

BEATRICE.

Stand back there, if you love me, or have  
loved!

*As LARA advances, BEATRICE retreats to the table  
and rings a small hand-bell. MIRIAM, in the  
dress of a page, enters from behind the screen,  
and steps between them.*

MIRIAM.

What would my master, Signor Juan, say—

LARA.     *[Starting back.]*

The Page? now, curse him!—What? no! Mi-  
riam?

Hold ! 'twas at twilight, in the villa-garden,  
At dusk, too, on the road to Mantua ;  
But here the light falls on you, man or maid !  
Stop now ; my brain's bewildered. Stand you  
there,  
And let me touch you with incredulous  
hands !  
Wait till I come, nor vanish like a ghost.  
If this be Juan's page, why, where is Miriam ?  
If this be Miriam, where's—by all the Saints,  
I have been tricked !

MIRIAM.      [*Laughing.*]

By *two* Saints, with your leave !

LARA.

The happiest fool in Italy, for my age !  
And all the damning tales you fed me with,  
You Sprite of Twilight, Imp of the old  
Moon !—

MIRIAM.      [*Bowing.*]

Were arrant lies as ever woman told ;

And though not mine, I claim the price for  
them—

This cap stuffed full of ducats twice a year!

LARA.

A trap! a trap that only caught a fool!  
So thin a plot, I might have seen through it.  
I've lost my reason!

MIRIAM.

And your ducats!

BEATRICE.

And

A certain set of turquoise at Malan's!

LARA. [*Catching BEATRICE in his arms.*]

I care not, child, so that I have not lost  
The love I held so jealously. And you—  
You *do* forgive me? Say it with your eyes.  
Right kindly said! Now, mark me, Beatrice:  
If ever man or woman, ghoul or fairy,  
Breathes aught against your worthiness—  
although  
The very angels from the clouds drop down

To sign the charge of perfidy—I swear,  
Upon my honor—

BEATRICE.

Nay, be careful there!  
Swear by the ocean's feathery froth—

LARA.

I swear,  
By heaven and all the Seraphim—

BEATRICE. [*Placing her hand on his mouth.*]

I pray you!

LARA.

I swear—if ever I catch Miriam  
In pointed doublet and silk hose again,  
I'll—

BEATRICE.

What?

LARA.

Make love to her, by all that's true!



BEATRICE.

O wisdom, wisdom! just two hours too late!  
You should have thought of that before, my  
love.

LARA.

It 's not too late!

BEATRICE. [To MIRIAM.]

To bed, you dangerous page!  
The Count shall pay the ducats. [*Exit MIRIAM.*]

LARA.

And to-morrow  
I'll clasp a manacle of blue and gold  
On those white wrists. Now, Beatrice, come  
here,  
And let me kiss both eyes for you!

BARBARA.

[*The Duke speaks.*]

I.

BARBARA has a falcon's eye,  
And a soft white hand has Barbara;  
Beware—for to make you wish to die,  
To make you as pale as the moon or I,  
Is a pet trick with Barbara!

Merrily bloweth the summer wind,  
But cold and cruel is Barbara!  
And I, a Duke, stand here like a hind,  
Too happy, i' faith, if I am struck blind  
By the sharp look of Barbara!

Ay, Sweetmou', you are haughty now;  
Time was, time was, my Barbara,  
When I covered your lips and brow  
And bosom with kisses—faith, 'tis snow  
That was all fire then, Barbara!

I will speak no bitter words :  
Too much passion made me blind.  
You were subtle. Let it go,  
For the sake of woman-kind !  
I will speak no bitter words.

But, Madam, as you pass us by,  
Dreaming of your loves and wine,  
Do not brush your rich brocade  
Against this little maid of mine,  
Madam, as you pass us by.

## III.

HERE is where they bring the dead,  
When they rise from the river's bed,  
Sinful women who have thrown  
Away the life they would not own—  
Life despised and trampled down!

Sad enough. Now, you who write  
Plays that give the world delight,  
Tell me if in this there be  
Naught for your new tragedy?  
Ha! you start, you turn from me  
A face brimful of misery!  
Do you know that woman there,  
That icy image of Despair?  
Have you heard her softly speak?  
Have you kissed her, lip and cheek?  
Faith! you do not kiss her now!  
Poor young mouth, and pale young brow,  
Drenched hair, and glassy eye—  
Go, put that in your tragedy!

## NOTES.

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### NOTE 1, page 95.

*When Heaven, for some divine offence,  
Smote Florence with the pestilence.*

"IN the year then of our Lord 1348, there happened at Florence, the finest city in all Italy, a most terrible plague; which, whether owing to the influence of the planates, or that it was sent from God as a just punishment for our sins, had broken out some years before in the Levant, and after passing from place to place, and making incredible havoc all the way, had now reached the west."—*Boccaccio*.

### NOTE 2, page 97.

#### APPLEDORE.

APPLEDORE is one of a cluster of nine islands, off the coast of New Hampshire, known as the Isles of Shoals.

## NOTE 3, page 107.

## LAMIA.

“ PHILOSTRATUS, in his fourth book *de Vita Apollonii*, hath a memorable instance in this kind, which I may not omit, of one Menippus Lycius, a young man twenty-five years of age, that, going betwixt Cenchreas and Corinth, met such a phantasm in the habit of a fair gentlewoman, which, taking him by the hand, carried him home to her house, in the suburbs of Corinth, and told him she was a Phœnician by birth, and if he would tarry with her, he should hear her sing and play, and drink such wine as never any drank, and no man should molest him; but she, being fair and lovely, would die with him, that was fair and lovely to behold. The young man, a philosopher, otherwise staid and discreet, able to moderate his passions, though not this of love, tarried with her awhile, to his great content, and at last married her, to whose wedding, among other guests, came Apollonius; who, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus' gold, described by Homer, no substance, but mere illusions. When she saw herself descried, she wept, and desired Apollonius to be silent, but he would not be moved, and thereupon she, plate, house, and all that was in it,

vanished in an instant; many thousands took notice of this fact, for it was done in the midst of Greece."

—*Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy.*

NOTE 4, page 121.

LANDER.

GEN. Fred. W. Lander died at Paw Paw, Virginia, March the 2d, 1862, of wounds received at Edward's Ferry, October 22d, 1861.















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